

Developing Personality Through Technical Exercise



MRS. LILLIAN JEFFREYS PETRI.

By LILLIAN JEFFREYS PETRI.

As all human beings are emotional, so are they all more or less musical, since music is the language of the emotions. Some are said to be, and perhaps even credit themselves with being, what is termed "unmusical," simply because they have never been trained to understand or appreciate the more abstract in music. But that such a one is fundamentally lacking in the ability to respond to the positive emotional element in music, or that he does not love a beautiful melody, I will never believe. However, possibly the "tune" must be a familiar one for him to recognize its contour, and therefore to love it.

Music may be considered from three standpoints to demonstrate its full educational value:

First—As an exact science it equals mathematics. Each tone has its exact relation to each other tone. Many people who seem to think they know something of music are still strangely ignorant of this fact. They seem to think that beautiful music is magical and springs into being through that vague thing they call "talent" or "genius." They do not know that, though born of emotional inspiration, it is governed by laws and formed by the brain in its perfect understanding of these laws.

Second—Its value in developing co-ordination. What we call "technique" is the upbuilding of finger facility—the ability to perform on some instrument or to sing the notes which we have been taught to read from the printed page. It is a very exact science, calling for the most careful training. Every motion must first exist in the mind before it can be transformed into meaningful physical execution of the music. This results in a perfection of co-ordination greater than that given by any other study of manual training. I say greater because in no other study is the aesthetic and imaginative so closely linked to the physical.

Third—The last of the three aspects of the study of music to which I wish to call attention is perhaps the most important of all—that of the training of the imagination and taste and the refining of the emotions, all of which comes about through interpretative analysis of compositions. This does not mean that a distinct story is to be thought of in connection with each piece, but that an intelligent comprehension of its emotional and dramatic import must be developed. Thus, I believe that the teacher should frequently play for the pupil, instilling into his mind a discernment of tonal shadings, emotional values and pictorial effects, all of which can be produced on the chosen instrument by the truly musical

Is a Singer Without Honor In His Own Country

By ANITA RIO.

I believe that it is a great mistake for young singers to go to Europe for an opportunity, before having done creditable work at home. There are as good vocal teachers here as in any country in the world. Singers should have their vocal foundation laid at home, and should make their debut here, either in opera, concert or oratorio. Art is universal and knows no nationality, and a singer whose work merits the applause of the American public stands a good chance of meeting success in other countries.

To the young singer who asks: "But how am I to get an opportunity to be heard? The agents want money to launch a singer, and the public wants artists of established reputation." I say this: A singer of ability can afford to begin at the bottom. Secure a modest church position, and with it will come opportunities to be heard in concerts and other musical affairs. At the beginning of my career I received ten dollars as my fee for my first concert appearance.

If a singer meets with scant approval

performer. The child (or older student) should then be led to listen for these same qualities in his own playing. Often a direct comparison between the student's and the teacher's performance of his own pieces proves quickening to his as yet unawakened or imperfectly developed musical imagination.

from his or her home public, let it be a warning that something is wrong. He or she has been deluded by unscrupulous vocal teachers, who have trained the material badly or given out hopes of a career where the musical equipment did not warrant it. At the outbreak of the war I was living in Italy. Europe was overrun with American singers, the majority of whom possessed but mediocre ability. They had tried their "musical wings" in America, and, having met with little success, thought their own people were lacking in appreciation of their musical worth. Yet they were hoping for success in Italy, with a far more difficult public. The result was pitiful.

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